

BDA BUZZ

A Newsletter of the Bristol Development Authority

SUMMER 2015

Focus on Fresh for Local Dining

This quarter, the BDA Buzz focuses on two restaurant "Peter's major goal is to showcase good ingredients, to venture out to eat in Bristol. With these three venues focusing "chains" and try something new and exciting for dinner.

The Willows & Time Out

The casual atmosphere at **Time Out**, a restaurant and sports Rt. 229, belies the intense preparation that goes into the food values on it," O'Connor says. preparation behind the scenes. The new Executive Chef, Peter Banister Johnson, is focused on bringing the best fresh food to the table in both the gastro pub area and the classic restaurant setting of the Willows.



According to Lynn Dell, General Manager of the DoubleTree, Johnson is inspired by the local farmers to create simple but classic dishes that "showcase good ingredients." Seeking to be different from what people may expect to find in a hotel restaurant, Dell and Aaron O'Connor, the Director of Food and Beverages, say that Johnson strives to bring that "fresh" vision to every area of the food service. The menu in both dining rooms changes with the seasons, monthly events focus on wine and beer tastings along with seasonal food celebrations, and a successful Friday evening acoustic music series has been a big draw.

openings and a new executive chef with a revitalized produce really good food from a really good source," said menu at an established eatery. These new events enhance O'Connor. "We wanted to make the restaurant an approach-Bristol's growing dining scene, making this a great time to able, fun place to dine, and we've achieved that." The special events, which included a Harvest Dinner held on September on farm-fresh, simple ingredients, it's time to break the 19 and a Wine Dinner coming up on October 23, are also occasions for O'Connor to assume the role of sommelier to showcase his growing wine cellar. "I want to break down the barriers to wine and let people have fun learning to understand what they like - and make wine approachable bar located within the DoubleTree by Hilton Bristol on and fun! We're building a good list that has many great

> "We are all about learning what the community is looking for, and fulfilling that demand." - Lynn Dell

Wine tasting classes are planned for the future, along with more acoustic music events - currently offered on the patio, they will move inside once the weather cools - and ongoing pairings of food, beverages, and fun. Monthly ladies' nights are catching on, and "Tap Takeovers" with locally brewed beers are also very popular in Time Out. A Hopfest planned for November 28 will be a fundraiser for the Environmental Learning Center. Currently, twelve craft beers from around the country are on tap at Time Out.

"We are all about learning what the community is looking for, and fulfilling that demand," Dell says. "We've brought together a great food and beverage team, and we're excited about what's happening here at DoubleTree. I hope people come and see what we have to offer."

Check out the menus for both the bar and restaurant online at www.doubletreebristol.com/dining.aspx. Reservations can be made for the Willows through OpenTable, which recognized it with an OpenTable Diners' Choice Award for 2015.

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- Housing Rehab Program Success

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Dining and Downtown

nce again, it's time for what is affectionately referred to as the **BDA Buzz** "Food Issue." Last September, we highlighted some of the City's best eateries for our summer newsletter. We're carrying on the tradition this year by introducing new restaurants, spotlighting new chefs at established eateries, and even examining a new category of food business: a kitchen incubator.

As I reviewed this issue, it was difficult not to notice a downtown theme. On the food front, I think many will agree that a downtown resurgence is tied to unique eating and drinking opportunities. The majority of restaurants on busy Route 6 are large, corporate chains –

with the exception of a few great independents like the new Fresh Worx, featured in our cover story. We encourage those seeking a break from the "chains" to check out Downtown Bristol and Forestville Center to find unique, independent eateries offering fresh meals, tasty drinks, and lively atmospheres.

Downtown dining doesn't steal all the spotlight. In this issue of the *Buzz*, we feature two businesses that chose to relocate downtown from two of the area's most significant retail locations: Route 6 and West Hartford. Kim Hotchkiss – owner of Catherine's Uniforms – relocated the well-known uniform store from the City's busiest retail corridor to a prime downtown location on Main Street. Another business owner, Ada Rios, moved her unique health spa from Park Road in West Hartford to downtown Bristol.

In an interesting story entitled "The 'Business' of the Bristol Blues," we marvel at the success of the summer collegiate baseball team's inaugural season. To round out this issue, John Neveu, the BDA's housing rehabilitation specialist, shares a typical success story from the BDA's Housing Rehabilitation Program.

Adm Milly

Justin Malley Director, Bristol Development Authority

The "Business" of the Bristol Blues

The on-field success of the Bristol Blues summer collegiate baseball team is well known. With strong athletic performance and cohesion as a team, the Blues created quite a buzz at historic Muzzy Field this summer. However, the Blues also succeeded off the field by forming critical partnerships with local businesses for unique marketing opportunities. These corporate sponsors, including Bristol Hospital and RGD Technologies, believed in the team and wanted to help them succeed. At the same time, the Bristol Blues relied on its corporate sponsors even before the first pitch crossed the plate.

"They know how to put on a show to draw a crowd."

- Chris Boyle

Thanks to owners David Lindland, Steve Lindland, and Elliot Scheiner, along with the leadership of General Manager Rick Muntean, the Blues had an outstanding first season. As the newest member of the Futures Collegiate Baseball League (FCBL), a 10-team collegiate summer league with teams located in CT, MA, and NH, the Blues clinched their division and ended the season ranked second in the league.

"The ticket prices were right, food and drink were inexpensive, and they knew how to put on a show to draw a crowd,"

says Chris Boyle, Director of Public Relations and Marketing at Bristol Hospital, one of the team's corporate sponsors. "It was a perfect storm for any casual baseball fan."

The team worked hard to draw more fans to the games throughout the season. "There is no law on the books that you have to buy a ticket," says Muntean. "You have to earn the patrons' respect. That's what we try to do with this franchise."

Prior to the season, the Blues set out to find several sponsors. The goal for them, however, wasn't just to find someone to help financially support the franchise. They were looking for partnerships where both parties were rooting for one another to succeed.



The "Business" of the Bristol Blues

RGD Technologies, a leading manufacturer of precision screw machine and CNC-machined components operating in Bristol since 1973, was the first corporate sponsor to endorse the team upon their arrival in Fall 2014. For RGD, being a corporate sponsor opened doors to new opportunities, including building relationships with the owners and players.



"The team ownership is a terrific group of guys," says Bob Dabkowski, owner of RGD Technologies. "Getting to know Elliot, Dave, and Steve over the course of last winter and into the new season, it was quickly evident that our business philosophies meshed. They have succeeded in establishing a top notch, talented ball club in an extremely short period of time, as well as bringing Muzzy Field back to life. The sponsorship and game experiences were so great that it was an easy decision to want to do more with the organization."

Dabkowski announced on September 3 that he's joined the Blues ownership team as an equal partner. "I am quite honored that they have asked me to join their effort to continue to grow the Blues organization and the FCBL. I am extremely eager to start working with the team," he says.



Bristol Hospital is another prominent local sponsor of the Blues first season. "It was a great partnership where we were able to do more than just sponsor the fireworks and get our logo out there. We were also the medical provider for the team, including administering the team's mandatory physicals," says Boyle. "They even hired our Emergency Medical Staff for all home games."

The Blues organization continued to support their partnership philosophy throughout the season, including their suggestion to host a "Pink Night" where attendees could bid on players' pink jerseys and bats with proceeds benefiting Bristol Hospital's Beekley Center for Breast Health and Wellness. The event was a huge success, raising more than \$1,700 that night for the Center.



In the spring, Eva Wickwire, Bristol Hospital's former Chief Development Officer and Assistant Vice President who played a major role in forging a relationship between the hospital and the Blues, passed away. Rick Muntean approached Boyle with the idea of having a moment of silence in remembrance of Eva at the July 4th game.

"I remember being very proud of the respect the fans showed towards Eva and her family. During the moment of silence, it was so quiet you could hear a pin drop," says Boyle. "The fact that the franchise wanted to honor Eva in that way, that's just another example of how great it was working with this organization."

From fan-friendly baseball to mutually beneficial partnerships, it was a first season to remember with the Bristol Blues. Their short season left fans wanting more and looking forward to what's in store for 2016. Everyone in Bristol wants to see this franchise continue to succeed, and according to Muntean, "they're here for the long-term."

In addition to Bristol Hospital and RGD Technologies, Muntean would like to recognize other important sponsors whose participation has made a great impact on the team's first season: The Bristol Press, Budweiser, Farmers Insurance, Liberty Bank, Papa John's, Pepsi, and Shepard Meadows which sponsored "The Strikeout Club."

Focus on Fresh for Local Dining

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Fresh Worx

Another take on the farm-to-fork restaurant movement opened its doors in August while still testing food items and perfecting its menu. The grand opening of Fresh Worx in September is the result of months of planning by owners Chris Skabardonis and Constantine Milonas, experienced restauranteurs launching their "Simply Fresh Food" concept on busy Rt. 6 across from the Bristol Plaza at 650 Farmington Ave.

> "This is real food, and we want to make sure our customers know what they're getting." - Constantine Milonas

Virtually everything is made fresh in the restaurant, which offers a casual dining experience. Walk up to the counter and select from a build-it-yourself menu of options for burgers, salads, gyros, and wraps with a wide variety of meat choices (beef, lamb, pork, and chicken or combinations); spices, sauces, garnishes and toppings; fries and drinks, including shakes, wine and beer. All of the produce is locally sourced, and everything is clean-label food, with no hormones or antibiotics.

"This is real food, and we want to make sure our customers know what they're getting," says Milonas. "Our chickens are vegan - like chickens are supposed to be."

The gyros are very popular, and the two owners were pleased with the steady flow of business in their opening weeks, considering that there had been no announcement that the restaurant had actually opened. A young workforce, all local hires, was trained carefully by the owners, who are meticulous about every detail of their operation.

"We're doing real well so far, selling a lot of everything chicken, burgers, gyros," says Skabardonis. "We haven't finalized the menu yet – we won't compromise our standards, so if we can't get it right, we won't serve it."

A Carvel Ice Cream franchise shares the space with Fresh Worx. When Chris and Constantine realized that Carvel holds the same high standards as they do, they decided to bring in the fresh ice cream maker. "They fit with our philosophy,"

Milonas says. "All the ice cream and cones are made fresh onsite. It was a good match."

Fresh Worx is open weekdays from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. More information is available at the Fresh Worx website, www.thefreshworx.com, or by calling 860-506-4203.

Skewers

A new restaurant serving fresh shish kebabs ranging from lamb to chicken to beef, and more, has arrived in downtown Bristol. Skewers offers homemade rice, freshly baked bread, and specialty Mediterranean cuisine to its patrons.

Skewers is open at 81 North Main Street, across from City Hall. Owned by the Karim family, the focus on Mediterranean style kebabs is simple and attractive. With four sons (Bahar, Irfan, Imran, and Mehran) ready to work and his wife Nargis' recipes providing the "secret ingredient," Skewers fulfills Karim's dream of having a family-owned and operated restaurant serving fresh, tantalizing food from his homeland. The Afghani family immigrated to the U.S. in 2000, and have

recently moved Bristol, and they are all eager to make Skewers a success. The young men have been educated in London, Bahar just returning from completing his MA degree in engineering.



"Bristol is a good location for us," Imran says. "We like the people and the location - everyone has been very helpful."

Shish kebabs with cuts of lamb, chicken, or beef, interspersed with vegetables such as onions, peppers, and tomatoes, are cooked on a grill to provide a simple and healthy meal. Paired with a specialty rice dish and small salad, the main courses are popular for their reliance upon fresh ingredients.

Three different salads - Mediterranean, Afghan, and the "Skewers salad" with a shish kebab on top – will be

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ThymeShare to Help Transform Food Scene

n today's economic environment, it is not easy for small ThymeShare plans to fill this gap in the marketplace by industry can be particularly unkind: most have heard the former Bristol Press building. ThymeShare's primary sobering success rates for new restaurants. Wouldn't it be business will be to provide turnkey commercial cooking great for new food businesses to have a stable environment space and professional guidance for the area's most in which to perfect their recipes, prepare delicious food promising food businesses - from caterers, to experienced economically, and even host pop-up restaurants and other executive chefs hosting pop-up restaurants, to a mom-andlarge food events without the financial pressures of pop baker producing treats in bulk. But, ThymeShare will occupying their own space?

businesses to find success right out of the box. The food launching a "food incubator" in downtown Bristol inside the

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New Holistic Center Open in Bristol

practitioners how to use her methods to bring natural healing massage. to their practices of Reiki, cosmetology, or massage therapy.



Ada Rios, a native of Guatemala, created a line of natural personal care products based on "Mayan secrets" that she formulated in her own kitchen. More than 9 years ago, Ada began her small business making shampoos, conditioners, lotions, soaps, and more. She now offers over 80 products, available seasonally and in special combinations for all skin types.

"The people of Bristol have been very welcoming. I think my sign creates a curiosity, and they come in to see what we're all about."

- Ada Rios

Combining fruits, vegetables, minerals, and therapeutic herbs, Ada makes a line of products to feed every family member's skin without harmful chemicals. "Everyone should be mindful of the products that we use on our bodies, just as we take care of the food that we eat," Ada says. "Your body deserves the best care you can provide, and we will show you how to use all-natural products to enhance your natural beauty and health."

After distributing her products in natural food stores like trip!" • Whole Foods, and selling through spas across the Southern and Midwestern United States, Ada decided to open a spa and retail store in West Hartford. There she saw the possibility of expanding to a more holistic approach. Using www.adarios.net.

da Rios: Body, Mind, and Nutrition opened a her products and her cosmetology background, Ada began Holistic Center in Bristol in August after operating a offering facials to her clients. Educating herself, Ada became health spa and retail store in West Hartford since 2012. The a Reiki Master and a reflexologist in order to offer those new center is a calm and welcoming place where spa services to her clients. She also created "pedicology and services are offered as well as weekly yoga and meditation manicology" which is a more healthful approach to pedicures sessions. Ada is especially interested in teaching other and manicures using reflexology, energy healing Reiki, and

> With this new Holistic Center in Bristol, Ada aims to provide families with ways to learn new approaches to better health. By using and learning about natural personal care, beauty, and health products, people can find alternative solutions to health issues through the practices of aromatherapy. nutrition, Pilates, yoga, life coaching, meditation, integrative breathing, reflexology, and Reiki.

> "The people of Bristol have been very welcoming," Ada says. "I think my sign creates a curiosity, and they come in to see what we're all about. I just love to welcome new people and want everyone to see what I offer that can help them in mind, body, and spirit."



In addition to skin and beauty products, Ada also has vitamins and nutritional supplements. She is partnering with various other professionals to offer smoking cessation programs and hypnosis, and will create workshops for any topic in which she recognizes a demand from her clients.

Ada Rios: Body, Mind, & Nutrition Holistic Center offers workshops for professionals who are interested in learning alternative therapies to health, beauty, and nutrition to bring back to their own workplaces. "We welcome other practitioners to come and learn about healthy products for your clients, and for your own use," Ada says. "Come to the Holistic Center and learn how to live and work in a chemical-free environment. You'll be happy you made the

To learn more about Ada Rios, visit the spa at 328 West Street, call 860-973-3065, or check out the website at

Focus on Fresh for Local Dining

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available, along with several other vegetarian options. A Middle-Eastern pizza called Lahmacun is also available. which is a spicy meat pie.

Kebabs are also available with "jumbo" chicken wings on a skewer, hot dogs on a skewer, and ground beef mixed with spices that is called a "chapli" kebab. Side dishes include Information about the restaurant can be found online at fresh hummus, samosas, and special fries called pakowra. Imran sings the praises of his mother's secret recipes.

"She makes the most unbelievable rice and homemade bread," Imran says. Several special sauces and unusual spices are used to flavor dishes that may be commonplace in the U.S., but have a new twist at Skewers. Desserts include homemade baklava and halvah. Beer and wine will also be available soon.

www.skewersforyou.com, by phone at 860-582-1007, or by searching Skewersforyou on Facebook. •

New Owner, New Space, New Possibilities

niforms are not what they used to be, and the new owner of Catherine's Uniforms, now located in downtown Bristol, will be making some changes to reflect the new trends and to enhance customer satisfaction. Kim Hotchkiss, a former veterinary hospital manager, will begin to do so by introducing new products and sales promotions to the longstanding Bristol business.

Since its establishment in 1949, Catherine's Uniforms has been a medical uniform shop located in Bristol, serving the area's professionals with high quality merchandise and personalized service. Originally opened by local registered nurse. Catherine A. Johnstone, it has seen some changes throughout the years.

This past spring, Hotchkiss was browsing in the uniform shop and began speaking with then-owner Maria Jun. who had purchased the business from Johnstone 25 years prior. "Maria mentioned she was moving out of state, so I asked what she planned on doing with her business," says Hotchkiss. "Her choices were either to sell or close the doors for good." Since Hotchkiss had some knowledge of the industry, thanks to her veterinary background, she decided to purchase the small business.

When Hotchkiss took ownership of Catherine's Uniforms, she moved the business from its Farmington Ave location to 194 Main Street. "I moved from the high traffic area on Route 6 to a larger space downtown. I love the old historic buildings and the homey feel that downtown gives you," says Hotchkiss. "The City is doing a great job of getting new businesses downtown and supporting them. I think we'll do well here."



New Products and Promotions

A new space isn't the only change that Hotchkiss is bringing to the Bristol uniform shop. To thank customers for shopping with them, Catherine's Uniforms will now offer special promotions, something new to the business. Promotions will include sale events, as well as customer and business referral discounts.

Hotchkiss hopes to get people back to shopping locally, especially with online shopping becoming increasingly more popular. She will be carrying some new products with different features and feels. "It's important to me that people like something before they buy it. I've heard a lot of stories about people ordering online to save time, but when the items they ordered don't fit or feel the way they wanted and those items need to be sent back, that doesn't end up saving them time at all. It can be very frustrating," Hotchkiss says. Ultimately, she wants to make shopping more convenient for customers, and give them the personal touch they don't get by shopping online.

> "The City is doing a great job of getting new businesses downtown and supporting them. I think we'll do well here."

> > - Kim Hotchkiss

Hotchkiss expressed her many goals and new ideas on growing her business in Bristol, including carrying a men's line for the first time. "The store incorporated unisex items into its inventory in past years, but never carried anything specifically for men. I think this will open up a huge market for us." Hotchkiss is also looking to expand the store's shoe line. particularly to include Dansko shoes, a best-selling brand and frequent request from customers. Additionally, her plan is to begin carrying school uniforms, hopefully before the start of school next year.

Catherine's Uniforms is open Tuesday-Wednesday 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Thursday 10 a.m.-7 p.m., Friday 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m.- 4 p.m. For more information, please visit its website at www.catherinesuniforms.com, or search "Catherine's Uniforms" on Facebook.

REAL ESTATE CORNER

For Sale

291 Queen Street Contact: Joel Witkiewicz 860-585-5635

4,940 square foot professional office building, currently set up for use as a medical office and can support multiple tenants. Convenient to Bristol Hospital, this property occupies nearly an acre of land and has ample parking.





For Lease

277 West Street Contact: O.V. Resources 860-589-5492

1,500 square feet of office space on corner lot, ample parking. On CT Rt. 69 close to the downtown area. Located across from the new Boys and Girls Club.

For Lease

99 Farmington Avenue (Route 6) Contact: John Cafasso 860-616-4013

5,000 square foot retail opportunity in prominent shopping center with large parking area and signalized intersection. Share center with Hallmark, Sleepy's, Radio Shack, Michael's Jeweler's - rate negotiable.





For Lease Contact: Blackline Retail 617-553-1820

Bristol Plaza property for lease. 1,000 - 16,000 square feet available in busy plaza on Route 6 with 1,244 parking spaces. Share shopping center with Stop & Shop, TJ Maxx, Dressbarn, Starbucks, and others. 28,800 vehicles a day drive along Route 6.



INDUSTRIAL REAL ESTATE SECTION

For Lease

201 Pine Street

Contact: David Richard 860-616-4026

71,000 square foot industrial building on 3.75 acres with 57,000 square feet available for rent. The space is sub-dividable to 12,000 square feet. This property has two cranes: one 3-ton and one 10-ton. It has rail access and is near the CT Rt. 72 on ramp.



For Lease

44 Dell Manor Drive Contact: Jeffrey Morrow 860-584-0510

Near ESPN and easy access to I-84 is a 5,000 square foot office/industrial space with loading dock, clear ceiling height of approx. 14 feet, gas heat, full shop AC.





For Sale

474 Birch Street

Contact: Nick Longo 203-578-0208

Located near ESPN and convenient to the highway, this approximately 22,500 square foot free-standing manufacturing facility sits on 2.44 acres with room for expansion. The facility includes good power, with a 200-foot electrical bus bar drop.



To see more, visit "Available Properties" at www.bristolct.gov/BDA

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORNER

The BDA Can Help You Improve Your Home

By John Neveu, BDA Housing Rehabilitation and Project Specialist

In the spring, an elderly homeowner – we'll call her Eva – contacted the Bristol Development Authority (BDA) after reading an article about grants the City has available to help people make essential repairs to their houses. Eva had lived in her home for many years and knew that there was work that needed to be done, especially repairs to her leaky roof, but she was on a fixed income and had no way to afford to make the costly repairs herself. Eva called the BDA for information.



When a City resident calls the BDA, a member of the staff will explain the program and can mail information that includes an application form. The questions we ask over the phone will help determine if a family will qualify. We ask: Do you own and live in the home? The rehab program is only for owner-occupied homes. Is this a single or multifamily home? We can give assistance up to a four-family house. How many adults living in the house have an income? Income is usually documented using the latest 1040 income tax form or a Social Security statement. The maximum income level for one person in 2015 was \$46,100.00. These income requirements change annually, so it is important to get the latest information by calling the BDA office and speaking with the staff.

In Eva's case, she was the only resident of her single family house, and her only income was from Social Security. After verifying the land records to verify if the property was clear of any liens and that no taxes were due, we sent the homeowner the application packet. I then scheduled an inspection of the property. I discovered that the electrical service (original to the 1967 ranch style house) was outdated, and that the fuse panel had been cut and modified to accept a manual circuit breaker. The modification was not in accordance with current building codes. The situation worried the homeowner, and I was concerned about the safety of the electrical panel.

The City was able to provide a grant to Eva that enabled her to replace the roof and gutters on her house, as well as funds to replace the faulty electric panel. Eva is now living in a much safer house thanks to the availability of CDBG funds.

Please call the BDA at 860-584-6185 to obtain information about the Housing Rehab Program, or visit our website at www.bristolct.gov/bda. ◆

John Neveu is the City's Housing Rehabilitation and Project Specialist with the Bristol Development Authority. The City's Housing Rehabilitation Grant program is available to low and moderate-income homeowners.

ThymeShare to Help Transform Food Scene

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also host cooking classes, attract legions of "foodies" to downtown for farm-to-table and other special events, and much more. In a nutshell, ThymeShare has the potential to help revolutionize Bristol's dining scene.



cold/freezer storage that can be rented to commercially produce food products. In addition, the facility may provide business development and support services, offer classroom training, and conduct public or private special events.

"We fell in love with Bristol," declares Bruce Hoffman, part owner of ThymeShare along with his wife, Liz. "We see the potential to help revitalize the food culture in this part of the State, with Bristol serving as the centerpoint. ThymeShare will become a food destination by offering everything from food truck festivals, to pop-up restaurants for the area's most celebrated executive chefs...we would even like to host cooking competitions similar to 'Iron Chef.'"

Similar to well-known office incubators, a "food incubator" is designed to provide a safe, supportive, low-risk environment to help food businesses find their bearings before hitting it big on their own. From a technical standpoint, a food incubator is defined as: A shared-use, commercial food preparation facility containing kitchen stations, preparation spaces, baking equipment, and dry/

For the Hoffmans, opening ThymeShare in Bristol is the realization of long and successful love affair with all things culinary. The pair enjoy traveling and exploring new food cultures, each with years of professional experience within service industries. Bruce spent years in restaurant management, helping to turn around underperforming eateries. Liz has extensive experience in marketing and customer service, with a special place in her heart for volunteering and giving back.

"Our goal is to create a wonderful business, but just as important is giving back to the community of Bristol," Liz says. "We plan to hire locally, collaborate with local charities and non-profits, offer children's programs, and so much more."